Wiki Post #2

Summary

                While his parents disagree about a lot of things, one thing that they do agree on is that the problems the family was having was due to witchcraft. Their mother was arrested because her pass was not in order, but they were able to free her the next day. She had to find a job and she went behind her husband’s back and got the children baptized so that that might help her in finding one. One night when their mother had brought in a brazier to heat the house she accidently left it inside overnight and the coals almost killed the children. Soon after the youngest daughter, Maria, fell ill and mother took her to the clinic, even though she didn’t have enough money to pay for it. Mark made fun of the feces cleaners while he was out one day and they made him pay the price for it, from which he learned a valuable lesson.

                Mark’s father brings him along to a visit to the witch doctor to see if he could get better luck with finding a job. While he is there Mark realizes that the standards of living at the tribal reserve are even worse than in Alexandra. He also doesn’t enjoy the visit with the witch doctor and finds it to be a little scary. A little while later another girl is born named Merriam. They also find out that Alexandra is being torn down so they are worried about where they will go. It takes longer than expected and they actually find another house and move in. At the new house Mark always tried to beg for food from the neighbors because his father again lost his job and they were starving. But his mother told him of how there were witches living near them and the food could be poisoned so he stopped begging for food completely. Mark begins to believe all the stories about the witches and the meanings for things that adults can’t explain. One morning his mother wakes Mark up early so they can go get his birth certificate papers, but when they got to their Grandma’s to drop off the other children, they realized that Grandma’s son Piet was arrested. He was getting tall and he didn’t have a pass book so they felt it right to arrest him. He was freed a couple days later. The next month Mark and his mother go on the same trip. They wait in lines for hours and the first day, the baas had left right when they got to the papers. They went again and were told that they needed a birth certificate. But when mother went to the clinic they said they needed papers before they could give her a birth certificate. Finally she asked a nice white woman who felt very bad for all she had been through and got her the birth certificate. Now Mark would be able to go to school. He didn’t want to go to school however, because the kids who lived on their own in the street and influenced his thinking. But when his mother made him realize how important it was, he decided he wanted to go to school.

Analysis

I think this part of the book shows how the rest of the book is going to follow. It is the start of Mark’s growing up and having a different opinion of his world and his life. He is starting to realize that the life he is living right now is not something that he wants to be doing for the rest of his life. When you’re young you always think that your parents are the best people in the world and that everything they do is right. But now Mark is starting to realize that that is not true. His father’s view is that education is not important, but once he heard what his mother thought about education, Mark decided that the only way he was going to have a chance to get somewhere in life would be if he got an education. So in this battle between his parents he has taken his mother’s side. That says a lot because wives and children are always supposed to follow the father’s rules and whatever he does. I think Mark’s willingness to go against his father is just the start of his the decisions he will make to better his life.

Application

This part of the book has many examples of human characteristics that are still the same today. Human ideals to seek perfection and achieve harmony through the pursuit of truth, love, justice, and beauty is evident in both Mark and his mother. Both of them want to better their lives and question what is the best way to go about it. They think that education is the best route, but then again that is going against what father thinks, which is frowned upon in their society. The fact that mother is going through so much to give her son an education shows the relationship between any mother and child. She wants what is the absolute best for her son, even if it means putting forth extreme amounts of effort, time, and patience. She knows that she could get in trouble with her husband, but she wants so badly for her son to get an education and better his life. While this isn’t the same scenario that every mother faces, every mother does the best that she can for her children’s sake, and that characteristic will always be the same.